SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE FOR PEACE

Inyo and Mono Counties, California

P. O. Box 1472, Bishop, CA 93514

NEWSLETTER
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"In every war there's a Hiroshima waiting to happen."

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Editor: Bob Jellison

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No More Hiroshimas

On August 6, 1945, 200,000 civilians were killed by a single nuclear weapon dropped on Hiroshima. The bombing of Nagasaki three days later added even greater numbers of civilian casualties to a toll that was already beyond the ability of many people to comprehend. While the end of the war was seen as a cause for celebration and a great technological success, the means by which this end was achieved has long been viewed by many as a great human failure. For many years, peace groups have commemorated this great destruction by observing the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

As we approach that date in the summer of 1991, we have the effects of the recent Persian Gulf War to consider. The great destruction by nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been more than equalled by modern conventional weapons in Iraq. In 1945, the immediate devastation was followed by years of continued illness, injury, and death from the after-effects of the bombing, especially of radioactive fallout. In 1991, the United States, while invoking great fear of the specter of Saddam Hussein possibly possessing and using nuclear weapons, has carried out a "near apocalyptic" bombing campaign which, according to U.N. officials reduced a modern industrial country "to the pre-industrial age."

The "celebration" in the United States of the end of this war has gone on for longer than the war itself, while in Iraq the devastating aftermath of the bombing continues to claim lives. Estimates of Iraqi casualties during the war range from 100,000 to 200,000. The Pentagon's references to "collateral damage" obscure the very real suffering which continues in Iraq as civilians struggle to survive amid epidemics, crop failures, and starvation caused by the destruction of the electrical, water, sewage, and irrigation systems. According to one U.S. study, 55,000 children under the age of five have already died as a result of the "delayed effects" of U.S. bombing. This same study predicts that at least 170,000 more children will die from epidemics and starvation.

War as a solution to human conflict is as much a failure now as it was in 1945. The lessons of these wars should be to teach us to fear the weapons of destruction that we have created and to lead us to support initiatives which will prevent the creation and testing of new weapons.

On August 6, 1991, at the Bishop City Park, the Sierra Nevada Alliance for Peace will once again commemorate the destruction of Hiroshima by U.S. nuclear bombs. We will meet for a potluck dinner, the sharing of information on recent efforts toward nuclear disarmament, and the folding of paper cranes. The paper cranes will be sent to the Hiroshima Memorial in Japan to join others sent from all over the world as symbols of hopes for peace.

A Comprehensive Test Ban: Now More Than Ever!

One of the greatest potential dangers facing the world today is the proliferation of nuclear weapons. One only need imagine if the Iraqi SCUD missiles had been armed with nuclear warheads. There are now nine nations which possess nuclear weapons or the capability to rapidly manufacture them and many more will have the ability in the near future if definite steps are not taken. The United States should provide the leadership necessary to strengthen the Non-proliferation Treaty and prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Instead, the U.S. has remained the major obstacle to the elimination of nuclear weapons testing, thus threatening the entire non-proliferation regime.

The 1968 Non-proliferation Treaty, in which 130 nations pledged not to pursue nuclear weapons development, expires in 1995. This treaty was accepted by those nations which did not have nuclear weapons when the U.S. and Soviet Union pledged to end testing of nuclear weapons and move toward nuclear disarmament.

The U.S. has almost single-handedly blocked every effort to end testing and development of nuclear weapons. In 1989, the United Nations voted 130 to 2 to end testing; only the U.S. and South Africa voted against the resolution. At last year's U.N. conference the U.S. blocked action to amend the Partial Test Ban Treaty. This would have ended all nuclear testing and prevented the spread of nuclear capabilities to less stable regions of the world. Currently only the U.S. and Great Britain stand in the way of a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons. Many of the countries who originally signed the Non-proliferation Treaty say they will not extend it in 1995 if the U.S. does not pursue a test ban.

In the past, verification issues blocked progress. Now the Soviets have agreed to all necessary measures to insure compliance, including permanently installed seismic equipment staffed by U.S. personnel.

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the United States was able to marshall international support for prompt action. Now President Bush demands that Hussein disclose all of his nuclear facilities or risk military action again. Support from other world leaders for this action is lacking due to our ambiguous record on nuclear proliferation. The U.S. maintains one of the two largest nuclear arsenals in the world and continues to pursue further testing and development while insisting that no other countries develop nuclear weapons. It is time for the U.S. to end this hypocrisy and exert the moral leadership necessary to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

THE MISSILE DEFENSE ACT; THE SON OF STAR WARS

On July 18, during its consideration of the F.Y. 1992 defense authorization bill, the Senate Armed Services Committee approved a controversial amendment called the Missile Defense Act of 1991, offered by Senators Nunn and Warner. The amendment, if approved by the full Senate and agreed to in the House-Senate defense bill conference, would commit the U.S. to the deployment of 100 anti-ballistic missiles at Grand Forks, North Dakota, by 1996. This step would be followed by the deployment of additional ground-based missile defense sites and space-based sensors, a clear violation of the ABM Treaty, a treaty which the amendment urges the President to renegotiate to allow for these multiple site defenses. The amendment authorizes $4.6 billion for SDI in F.Y. 1992, including substantial funding for space-based systems like Brilliant Pebbles. (The House deleted all funding for Brilliant Pebbles this year).

What you can do: Express outrage to your Senators and urge them to reject the expensive idea of deploying an SDI system. Point out the irony and error of the Senate voting to violate one treaty (ABM) while the U.S. is preparing to sign another (START). Urge your Senators to support amendments which would prohibit development and deployment of a ground-based SDI system and to significantly cut SDI funding.

Where to Write or Call

Senator John Seymour
(202) 224-3841
Senator Alan Cranston
(202) 224-3553
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Bill Thomas (Inyo)
(202) 225-2915
Hon. Richard Lehman (Mono)
(202) 225-4540
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

A special thanks to Kathy Anderson and Irene Yamashita for helping produce this newsletter.

Commemorate Hiroshima Day with S.N.A.P.

Join friends to fold cranes and send our hopes for peace.

Potluck Dinner 6:30 P.M.
August 6th at Bishop City Park

For more info. call:
Bob Jellison at 873-6445

Sierra Nevada Alliance for Peace

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